DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 045 324 RE 003 180

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TITLE Improving Reading Instruction for Junior College Students: Some Recommendations.
PUB DATE May 70
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the conference of the International Reading Association, Anaheim, Cal., May 6-9, 1970

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.65
DESCRIPTORS Course Objectives, Instructional Materials, *Junior Colleges, *Reading Materials, *Reading Programs, Teaching Machines

ABSTRACT

Recommendations are discussed as a guide for the establishment and improvement of reading programs at the junior college level. These recommendations are (1) to determine program objectives, (2) to evaluate periodically the degree of attainment of the objectives, (3) to know what is needed for a program, (4) to become thoroughly familiar with materials available for use and know how to use it effectively to accomplish the objectives, (5) to know how and when to use equipment in an instructional program (such as the Wireless Multi-Channel Reading System, the Craig Reader, the Shadowscope Pacer, and the Language Master), and (6) to involve the entire college faculty in the reading improvement program. Materials available for use in improving reading instruction are listed, and references are included. (DE)

ED 045324

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Improving Reading Instruction for Junior College Students:

Some Recommendations

Presented at IRA Session: The Learning Center in the Junior College

There are many recommendations which could be made to persons beginning a reading improvement program at the college level. The recommendations set forth in this paper are based upon the recent implementations of such a program at Georgia Southwestern College. They are not all-inclusive but are designed to serve as a guide for establishing a program at the jr. college level or for improving an existing program.

Recommendation 1.

The first recommendation and one which is basic to any instructional program is to set objectives. These objectives should be both general and specific and should answer such questions as: What do you want to teach? How will you know when you have taught it? and What materials and procedures will work best to teach what you wish to teach? (4)

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The general objective for a reading improvement program could be to help the student improve his skills so that he can perform more effectively in his college work. The specific objectives could include such areas as the improvement of reading and listening comprehension, development of vocabulary, increase in reading speed, and improved techniques of study. The objectives should be written in such a way that they clearly state what you plan to teach in your particular program. Because your program is geared to meet the particular needs of your students, the objectives you set may differ from those of other reading improvement programs. Likewise, as your students' needs change there may be reason to alter your objectives.

Recommendation 2.

Evaluate periodically to ascertain to what extent you are meeting the stated objectives, i.e. to answer the question "How will you know when you have taught it?" Whatever evaluative procedures are used, they should be in accordance with the originally stated objectives. Evaluation of certain areas of comprehension, vocabulary and reading rate may be accomplished through daily checks of student performance in the lab, as well as through pre- and post-testing using a number of readily available standardized tests. Improvement in these basic skills can generally be seen; however, academic achievement in terms of improved grade point averages (GPA) may not be so easily shown. When comparing the effect of having or not having reading study skills instruction on the GPA of college students, Hafner(3) and Colvin(1) found no statistically significant gain or loss in GPA. On the other hand, Freer(2) found that students in a college reading program made a higher GPA than students receiving no formal reading instruction.

Recommendation 3.

Know what you want in a program. Do you want a walk-in situation where a student comes to you when he wants help and you provide the necessary diagnostic procedures followed by an individual plan of study for the student? Or do you want a more structured program where students enroll in a class or lab and meet on a regularly scheduled basis? The objectives you set and the kind of program you choose should reflect the type student with which you will be working. Some students who really need improvement are not motivated enough to voluntarily come to the reading center for help. And many who come will not have the initiative to follow through with a plan of study when they are left to do it on their own. A combination approach whereby both types of programs are in operation may better serve the students' needs.

Recommendation 4.

Become thoroughly familiar with material available for use and know how to use it effectively to accomplish your objectives. This requires much time and careful study of the numerous workbooks and programed materials geared toward improving reading and study skills of college students. The materials listed at the end of this paper represent some of the many available reading workbooks and programed aids. Two or three such books which best meet your objectives could serve as basic texts. Additionally, four or five copies of several different workbooks can serve the special needs of individual students. These can be taken apart and used as needed in a number of ways to teach specific skills. The workbooks you select for your program should reflect the skills you plan to teach.

Students' textbooks should be used to encourage transfer of acquired learning skills to courses the student is presently taking. Paperback books provide an excellent source of free reading material, and they seem to have even more appeal when displayed on a bookstore-type spinner rather than a bookshelf. Books should be varied in interest and reading level. Magazines, journals, and newspapers provide material which is easy to use and of interest to students at varying ability levels.

Recommendation 5.

Know how and when to use equipment in your instructional program. To do this, you must be well-informed of the many types of hardware on the market. Although the reading skills can be taught without the use of aids, there are several types of equipment which can be quite productive especially in motivation, but also in the acquisition of, and application of learning skills. Among that available for use, students at Georgia Southwestern have selected the equipment described below as being most helpful to them.

The Wireless Multi-Channel Reading System is designed to help the student improve various language skills. It allows the teacher to simultaneously direct separate lessons from any source with an audio portion(audio notebook, phonograph, T. V.,tape recorder) to various groups regardless of their seating arrangements. If a room in the library or in the dormitory is wired for the system, a small wireless receiver can be sued to tune in to a lesson being programed from the reading lab. It operates in a manner similar to a radio station. Lectures of professors can be taped and used as practice in notetaking. Along with the tape, ask the professor to give you a written outline of the important points of the lecture. The instructor can use this to compare with the notes the student take while listening. Encourage the professor to come

into the lab and work with students in notetaking in his particular discipline. He may also be willing to give some pointers on more effective reading techniques particular to his discipline. Collect tapes and outlines from professors in different departments. These sessions are especially relevant to the student, who is presently or who may soon be enrolled in a class under that professor.

The reading instructor, or any other instructor, may lecture through the console. Since outside distractions are minimized, attention and concentration on the part of the student is heightened. When given a choice of listening to a lecture through the console or listening regularly, students at Georgia Southwestern almost always prefer to listen through the console. At the college level, the Wireless Multi-Channel Reading System is most useful for teaching listening comprehension and skill in notetaking.

The Craig Reader provides serial tachistoscopic training and expanded line training. The tachistoscopic training requires the student to remember digits that are exposed serially for fractions of a second and to record them. The expanded line technique permits the student to progress from lines containing only three words to lines containing more than seven words under controlled conditions. Since the Craig Reader is used individually, it permits the student to progress at his own rate. After a very short time on the machine, the student answers comprehension questions. He is then directed to a reading improvement book to read a story at about the same difficulty level. An educationally sound feature of the program is this built-in transfer of skills. Programed materials which accompany the Craig Reader include a box of training and reading slides, student workbook for vocabulary training and recording of answers, reading improvement book, and workbook containing comprehension film questions and answers. Materials are available at many different difficulty

levels. This one program compares to group training on the tachistoscope and controlled reader but has the advantage of the individualized approach.

The Shadowscope Pacer is also used on an individualized basis. It can be used with any books or magazines. The purpose of the instrument is to pace the reader at a fixed rate of words per minute. A beam of light moving down the page acts as the pacing device, yet gives some flexibility of speed to the reader. Coordinated reading materials are available for use with the pacers on various difficulty levels. The students' own textbooks or free reading material provide excellent materials for use with the Shadowscope

The Language Master is another aid which can be effectively used on an individual basis with college students. By utilizing pre-recorded sets of vocabulary cards, a student sees a word and its definition, hears the correct pronunciation, and has an opportunity to record the word himself. He then may listen to compare the instructor's pronunciation with his own. There are several pre-recorded sets of vocabulary cards on difficulty levels which would be applicable to college students; however, sets of blank cards can be purchased and programed to fit specific needs. Encourage each department on campus to participate in recording a structured set of vocabulary terms which they consider basic to the discipline. This gives you another set of materials which are of extreme interest to the students because of relevancy. It also puts the vocabulary into a meaningful context.

These and other machines are useful as motivational devices. The machine itself is used for a very short period of time, then the student moves to the printed page. Transfer of skills acquired through use of equipment is an important step in the training process and should not be ignored or left to chance.

Recommendation 6.

Get the total college faculty interested and involved in the reading improvement program. Faculty interest can be aroused through publicity. Once objectives have been set, let the faculty know the objectives and the methods by which you hope to attain the objectives. Give a brief description of your program at a faculty meeting at the beginning of each academic school year. Make use of the student newspaper for articles describing the facilities of the reading center and the student services available. The Public Relations director on your campus can offer valuable assistance in getting publicity in the local and area newspapers, radio and television stations. Make color slides of your students involved in reading skill development and use these when you speak to the civic organizations in your town. Develop brochures, pamplets, or book marks which can be easily distributed to faculty, students, and others.

Another way to get faculty interest is through their active participation in some phase of the program. Two methods have already been mentioned where faculty members aid in developing materials that are relevant to college classes a student is taking. One involved making tapes of lectures and supplying appropriate outlines which could be used for note-taking practice. Another involved recording vocabulary cards for a particular discipline. There is an increased interest when faculty realize that you are attempting to help the student perform at a higher level in his particular area.

Make faculty aware of any materials and equipment in the reading lab which they might use in self improvement. Any help given to the faculty toward self improvement would be worthwhile if it had no further effect than that on the individual faculty members; however, it has more wide

reaching effects. Not only are their students given the benefit of better informed teachers, but the participating faculty members will be more enthusiastic in recommending the reading program to students, and this enthusiasm is passed right along to their students. For these reasons it should be stressed that if at all possible, specify an area apart from the student lab where faculty might come at any time and make use of the facilities.

At no other time has there been more need for improving the reading ability of students. A majority of students at the jr. college level could benefit from a well designed program of reading instruction. Although improved reading ability should make these students more proficient in the time they spend studying, it may be too much to ask of a reading course that it raise the student's ambitions for higher academic achievement(grades). Although onewould hope for an improved grade point average, for many of the students improvement of reading skill in itself is a worthy accomplishment

A List of Certain Materials Available for Use In Improving Reading Instruction

Berg, Taylor and Frackenpohl, Skimming and Scanning, Educational Developmental Laboratories, Inc., 1962.

Beringause and Lowenthal, The Range of College Reading, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1967.

James I. Brown, Efficient Reading, Heath, 1962.

James I. Brown, Guide to Effective Reading, Heath, 1966.

James I Brown, Programed Vocabulary, Meredith Publishing Co., 1964.

Marion Brown, Learning Words in Context, Chandler Publishing Co., 1961.

Casper and Griffin, Toward Better Reading Skill, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959.

Marie Cherington, Improving Reading Skills in College Subjects, Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1951.

Nancy B. Davis, Basic Vocabulary Skills, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.

Doyle and Mittwer, Basic Reading Patterns, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Edwards and Silvaroli, Reading Improvement Program, Wm. C. Brown Co., 1967.

Ella A. Erway, Listening: A Programmed Approach, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.

Joseph A. Fisher, Reading to Discover Organization, McGraw-Hill Book Co.,1969.

Funk and Lewis, 30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary, Washington Square Press, Inc., 1942.

Doris Gilbert, Breaking the Reading Barrier, Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1959.

Doris Gilbert, Power and Speech in Reading, Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1956.

Doris Gilbert, The Turning Point in Reading, Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1969.

M. D. Glock, The Improvement of College Reading, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967.

Anita E. Harnadek, Critical Reading Improvement, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.

Arthur W. Heilman, Improve Your Reading Ability, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956.

Selma E. Herr, Effective Reading for Adults, Wm. C. Brown Co., 1966.

Hill and Eller, Power in Reading Skills, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1964.

Lee A. Jacobus, Improving College Reading, Harcourt, Brace and Ward, Inc., 1967.

Everett L. Jones, A New Approach of College Reading, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc. 1964.

Jones, Morgan and Petty, Effective Reading for College Students, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968.

Martha J. Maxwell, Skimming and Scanning Improvement, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.

Lyle L. Miller, Increasing Reading Efficiency, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964.

Maxwell H. Norman, Successful Reading, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Pagels, Pinney, and Stiff, Reading and Interpreting, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1968.

Patty, Ruhl, The Need to Read, American Book Co., 1968.

Francis P. Robinson, Effective Reading, Harper, Row, 1962.

Shaw and Townsend, College Reading Manual, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969.

Julia F. Sherbourne, Toward Reading Comprehension, Form 2, Heath, 1966.

Spache and Berg, The Art of Efficient Reading, Macmillan Co., 1966.

Ruth Strang, Study Type of Reading Exercises, College Level, Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1961.

Stroud, Ammons and Bammon, Improving Reading Ability, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1956.

Elinor Yazzy, How to Write Your Term Paper, Chandler Publishing Co., 968.

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